(d) whether Government have any plan to low down the call charges of this facility?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Bids were invited from firms/consortiums of firms for franchising of Integrated Train Enquiry System (ITES) consisting of establishment, operation and maintenance of zonal hubs which will be linked with regional call centres being set up by Rail Enquiry franchisee (REF). The main features of the call centres would be:

(i) A universal telephone number 139 will be provided without prefixing any Subscriber Trunk Dialing (STD) code to get connected to the call centre.

(ii) Both Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) and manual enquiry will disseminate information on train running status, reservation status of passenger, availability of accommodation and other value added services.

(c) Enquiry system is yet to start, hence no earnings estimates can be given at this stage;

(d) The prescribed rates to be charged from the customer enquiry services are as under:

Basic Enquiry Services:

- Rs. 1.20 per pulse of 180 seconds for calls originating from Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata & Chennai Metropolitan areas/circles.
- Rs. 1.20 per pulse of 60 seconds for call originating from places other than Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai metropolitan areas/ circles.

Expenditure incurred on advertisement in print media

1938. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of expenditure incurred during financial year 2004-05 and 2005-06 towards advertisement in print media;

(b) how these advertisements are regulated and newspapers selected for such allotment; and

(c) whether it is a fact that free railway passes are issued to newspersons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Rs. 88.46 crore in 2004-05 and Rs. 92.61 crore in 2005-06.

(b) These advertisements are released to the newspapers approved by the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) based on their standing, circulation, place of publication, target area, availability of funds, etc. on rotation basis to a limited number of publications for a particular insertion.

(e) Single to & fro journey passes are issued in favour of news-persons occasionally for covering events connected with Railway working with the approval of the Competent Authority in relaxation of extant rules.

Opening up passenger train service to private sector

1939. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to open up passenger train services to the private sector, and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Services announced in rail budget

1940. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the train services announced in 2006-07 railway budget have been started;

(b) if so, the names/details of the trains service which have been introduced, so far, and which are to be introduced and by when; and